EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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Remarks

Original mailed, 21 Mar 88.

STAT

D/Executive Secretary

21 Mar 88

Date

3637 (10-81)

Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

March 21, 1988

Dr. Roy Godson
Consortium for the Study of Intelligence
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Suite 601
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Roy:

You did a nice job of editing. I have only one minor correction -- on page 7.

I look forward to seeing you for lunch on the 29th.

Regards,

STAT

Robert M. Gates

Enclosure:
Discussant Remarks

DISCUSSANT REMARKS
Hon. Robert Gates

To a substantial degree, the essays here, although addressed to intelligence requirements for analysis in the 1990s, could also have applied to intelligence analysis in the 60s, 70s, and 80s.

My comments are divided into three categories. First, the relationship between the analyst and the policymaker. Second, the analysts' background, recruitment, and training. Third, intelligence requirements.

First, the analyst and the policymaker. Paul Seabury writes that "intelligence should not crave, for itself, a puristic, aloof, independence akin to academic freedom." I couldn't agree more. I recall during James Schlesinger's brief tenure as Director of Central Intelligence his complaint that the people at the CIA had forgotten they worked for the United States Government. It seems to me that support for the policymaker also means, on a fairly regular basis, telling them things they don't like to hear. In fact, unless intelligence officers are down in the trenches with the policymakers and understand the issues, know what US objectives are, how the process works, and who the people are, they cannot possibly provide either relevant or timely intelligence that will contribute to better informed decisions.

B-802-R

I have spoken recently of a significant degree of institutional autonomy for the CIA, and Seabury's paper addresses this topic. Autonomy is positive in that intelligence analysis is not subject to the parochial views of one or another policy agent. By the same token, autonomy is negative if it somehow involves being aloof or apart from the policy process and from those who seek intelligence support. I am also very sympathetic to Eliot Cohen's concern over the concept of no-fault intelligence, that all our problems somehow derive from the failure of policymakers or failures inherent in the intelligence problems we deal with.

I agree with Cohen that in the past inaccurate intelligence analysis either has contributed to faulty decisions, or has allowed policymakers to go on their way without having to deal with at least an alternative perspective. Some of these shortcomings in the past have been due to inadequacies in the way we approached the analysis itself as well as the substantive advice of the analysts involved. In recognition of this, significant changes were made in the Directorate of Intelligence in the CIA, both in its organization and approach to analysis in the early 80s.

With respect to background, recruitment, and training, to which both authors devote considerable attention, let me first acknowledge Cohen's point about the large number of relatively

new analysts both in the CIA and in other intelligence agencies. The fact is that some, probably half the analysts in the CIA, have on the order of only five to ten years' experience. The exodus of officers from CIA's clandestine service in the second half of the 1970s has been widely commented upon. It is less well-known that at least as high a percentage of people left from the analytical side of the house as well. They did so for three reasons. First, a generation that had come into the Agency in the late 40s or early 50s came to the end of their careers. Second, during the late 1970s the government made it financially very attractive for people to retire. But, third, and equally important, many people in both directorates, operations and intelligence, simply found after the travails of the 70s that the business was no longer very much fun, and many who could have stayed longer in fact left. So new analysts had to be hired simply to replace those who departed. Additionally there was a significant growth in the size of the analytical directorate. The result of all these factors was a substantial number of relatively new analysts, with the attendant loss of experience and institutional memory.

But, I perhaps reflect a certain generational difference in saying that there was a good side to this as well. Newer people came in who did not carry a lot of baggage from the past, including old fights with other intelligence agencies, who did not carry a lot of scars from old wars with policymakers, and

especially whose backgrounds were in many respects superior to those of the people they replaced in terms of area and language expertise.

Now, on recruitment, Seabury speaks of the overreliance on "highly homogeneous young, inexperienced white Caucasians with top records of academic performance, coming from nice, good middle-class families." I share this concern that our recruitment brings us a heavy percentage of these people. In a 1973 article critical of our work on the Soviet Union, I noted "There is a wide cultural gap between a college-educated analyst in the West, and the Soviet leadership. The same thing might be said of Iranians, Chinese, and a variety of others."

This cultural gap can be overcome in two ways: first, by looking for people with intensive foreign studies backgrounds and languages who have lived abroad, and secondly, by immersion in the culture of a country for a long period. To the extent we are unable to hire immigrants from other countries for our own employees, we should look at them for insight in our analysis of other cultures. It seems to me we have been deficient in this respect in taking advantage of both emigres and defectors.

I agree with both authors that we need language skills, analysts with a great deal of history, and significantly greater cultural diversity. I further agree that the cadre not only of

US intelligence analysts but US officials generally is today considerably more parochial culturally than was the case in the 1950s. In fact, some of those who helped found the clandestine service probably couldn't get in the CIA today.

Now, let me address training. The Cohen essay draws on an article entitled, "Managing/Teaching New Analysts." He cites the article as saying that "the manager's first task is akin to deprogramming--undoing habits formed in four to ten years of college-level work." Cohen suggests, "The remark about deprogramming reveals a disdain for universities." Seabury in his essay observes: "The analytical intelligence community has no other raison d'etre other than that of furnishing information, reasoned judgments and estimates on which rational action is possible. In this the intelligence community differs greatly from the ethos of the academy."

It seems to me there are three areas where academic training should contribute to the formation of an intelligence analyst. The first is in making the analyst understand that brevity is critical. Second is the amassing of detail according to a clear line of analysis, and drawing clear conclusions. Third, insuring relevance and timeliness so as to enable action. But this is hardly what most graduate programs teach.

I agree that training and education in the interrelation of foreign cultures is critical. Cohen cites Abram Shulsky, "that the problem of penetrating another government's workings does not resemble the challenge of unraveling 'a hidden, but ultimately knowable, process of nature.' Rather, it a 'struggle between two human intelligences, each of which is trying to outpsych the other.'" I concede that in the past too many intelligence managers have placed little value on the idea that peoples of other cultures have different habits of thought, different values, and different motivations. They apparently rejected the idea that somebody who presumably has an intimate knowledge of cultural difference has any particular usefulness. But that view--and that view did exist to a considerable extent--is largely a thing of the past, or least I hope it is.

Citing again the article I wrote in '73 I said, "The fact remains that our perception of situations is widely divergent from the Kremlin's perception. The Soviet Union has a strange and idiosyncratic policy not to be dealt with without conscious effort." I added: "An analyst trying to understand the Soviet leaders or their approach to problems is seriously handicapped without a background in Russian history and culture, and the importance of this can hardly be overemphasized. I recommend that intelligence agencies should take steps to insure that future analysts have training in Russian and Soviet history and culture, that analysts without such training should be sent to

school to acquire it." In 1973, I was a fairly lonely voice arguing for this. At that time I was the only person in my unit in the DDI with an academic background in Soviet studies. My first branch chief was an expert on the Middle East and the other in Southeast Asia. Because of hiring policies in the last decade, this situation has changed dramatically.

Both essays speak of mirror-imaging. I believe it is this lack of regional expertise that contributes significantly to mirror-imaging. This problem has diminished in recent years, in part because of this change in hiring practices and in the number of people who have area expertise and experience. I accept totally Dr. Cohen's emphasis on the importance of intelligence highlighting the "otherness of the enemy."

STAT With respect to training and education of analysts in the 1990s, I'd like to quote [redacted] in dividing ~~divide~~ what we don't know into two categories: secrets and mysteries. Secrets are those things, to use Cohen's reference, such as the physics underlying a Soviet barrage attack, that are potentially knowable. Mysteries, again to use Cohen's point of reference, have to do with the interpretation of foreign cultures, with that struggle between two human intelligences, each trying to outpsych the other.

In the latter there are often no clear-cut answers, often because the other leaders themselves do not know what they are

going to do or have not worked out their problems. And here our best contribution can be to help the policymaker understand the thought processes involved, the other guy's approach to the problem and how it is consistent with his culture, the alternatives that are open to them, and our estimate about which they are most likely to choose.

We have taken a number of steps to deal with the need for varied backgrounds and languages described in both essays. In an ideal world, every analyst we hired would have specialized background knowledge and one or more foreign languages as a usable tool. In the real world of American education and people who can meet our security qualifications, those two don't necessarily coincide entirely. We can not do that well. Between 40 percent and half of all those we hire as political analysts do meet these substantive qualifications, and we try to give the others additional education so they can do as well.

For example, over the years we have sent a number of people to Chinese and Russian studies programs, both for language and history. We also try to educate our analysts to deal with problems not addressed in universities. For example, we have a deception analysis course on the techniques and practices of deception, and methodology for identifying them. For two years we have been teaching a seminar on intelligence successes and failures, that uses case studies to illustrate causes of

intelligence failures and how to encourage more effective analysis. I might add it is one of our most popular courses. And we have added others as well in an effort to help improve our understanding of foreign cultures and add "ground truth" to our analyst's view.

Let me close my discussion of training with several observations, beginning with Dr. Seabury's reference to Angelo Codevilla's paper several years ago discussing empiricism in our culture. It seems to me that intelligence analysis must combine an examination of empirical factors with a range of other considerations, including not only motivation, commitment and determination, but also history, logic, and motive. In those areas where our empirical evidence or intelligence is ambiguous or even absent, there is always the danger in an analysis of saying that because nobody heard or saw the tree fall, it must not have fallen. If a question arises about whether or not a foreign nation is doing something, and if the information is scanty, we must take into account the nation's past behavior, whether they had a motive for such activity, and whether that action would be a logical extension of that. I think our experience with terrorism is an example. So I think there is no question that we have to take into account "nonempirical" considerations.

The analyst has to build a case regardless of the nature of the project. He has to bring together both empirical data and subjective considerations in describing events that have taken place or policies as they have been developed. Only if the analyst thus establishes a presumptive and persuasive base of argumentation--a case, if you will--can he then bring the reader along when he begins to speculate about the future. It seems to me the analyst has to persuade the policymaker that he, the analyst, knows what he's talking about, has mastered the material and understands the culture he is dealing with before he has any credibility to forecast the future.

In dealing with the so-called mysteries we have to discuss the alternative ways events may develop. At the same time, the intelligence community owes the policymaker a clear-cut best estimate. We are not paid to simply provide an array of alternatives or options. The policymaker wants to have some sense of what we think will happen. We simply need to be honest with the policymaker as to the quality of our evidence and the degree of confidence we have in our judgments.

Today, high priority is being attached to hiring analysts who have lived abroad, who have area expertise and foreign languages. We also are attaching high priority to developing extensive contacts with experts in the academic community and think tanks in order to have people challenge the analysts' views

and bring other information and perspectives to bear on our problems. As for problems of deception and denial, thanks in substantial measure to the efforts of Senator Wallop and Angelo Codevilla, they have become a growing part of our analyst training curriculum. These and all other changes I have been speaking about proceed at different paces, but substantial progress has been made. We have to keep the pressure on to keep these going.

Finally, because both authors focus primarily on training, the need for analysts familiar with foreign, and shall we say alien, cultures, there is very little focus in either paper on substantive requirements. Let me address what they do say and make a few observations on my own.

Paul Seabury focuses on the need for analysts who can see connections between widely-separated trends and events. One of the disadvantages of a regional organization for analysis is that it tends to make the interconnection of such events more difficult. It was in recognition of this that we created several organizations to try to bridge these regional patterns. We created an insurgency center, an organization to deal with subversion worldwide so we could track patterns, particularly of Soviet, Cuban, and Libyan involvement in insurgencies around the world. So we have tried to establish some connective tissues, if

you will, that will enable us to address these transregional phenomena.

One of the most important assets we have in connection with this is with academics and think tanks. It is often the people in these pursuits who can give us the macro analysis that at least points us in the right direction or gives us the right questions to try to answer.

I think Dr. Cohen, however, has put his finger on a larger issue with respect to requirements for the 1990s. He writes: "Henceforth the United States will no longer have the luxury of concentrating its intelligence assets overwhelmingly on its chief target, the Soviet Union." He then points to a number of other problems that are certain to become significant intelligence challenges. I not only agree, I would have to say this trend began several years ago. We now have something on the order of 50 percent of the assets of the intelligence community focused on the Soviet problem.

My principal worry for the 1990s is that the absence of intelligence guidance and priorities from the senior levels of the policy community will result in a continued diffusion of our efforts as we are pushed in the direction of satisfying an increasingly wide range of problems. In anticipation of the 1990s, the intelligence community itself is going to be forced to

reexamine its priorities and at some point inform the policy community and the Congress it can no longer carry out an open-ended program of collection and analysis on every conceivable subject of interest to the American government.

Beginning with the Soviet Union, we are going to have to identify the hard-core issues where we will devote all the necessary resources to working the problem satisfactorily, knowing in advance that this choosing will withdraw an intelligence effort from areas that are peripheral to national security concerns but which have influential bureaucratic and congressional constituencies. Identifying those areas other that the Soviet Union will be a difficult and painful task.

Let me close with several observations.

While I am a strong supporter of the idea of specialized area training and having analysts who not only have lived in a foreign country but have studied its language and culture and are steeped in its history, I must say that often regional experts are less competent in forecasting discontinuities. It is often forgotten that the CIA's analyst on Iran in the 1970s had worked on Iran for 20 years. That, in my view, was part of the problem. While a deep understanding of a country's politics and history will help in understanding their actions and reactions, the fact is that in most countries actions are part of long, continuous

chains of events. Thus those most familiar with these long, slow processes are those who will find reasons to say that the warning signs of instability have occurred before, fit into a historical pattern, and therefore can be dismissed. Maybe they are right and maybe they are not. In short, there needs to be a combination of people with area expertise and those who fly broadly, who ask hard and sometimes even simple questions. We also need to seek out those who have unorthodox views or challenge the conventional wisdom.

Dr. Cohen speaks of short-term analysis rather that long-term research. This was a significant problem until a few years ago. With the drawdown in the 1970s, the CIA was forced to abandon its long-range research on Soviet defense industries and also the Third World. The mail of the day always had to be answered. One of the principal benefits of the significant new resources provided over the last eight or nine years by both the Administration and the Congress has been to allow us to establish a significant foundation for a long-term research program where the resources are protected for carrying out these projects. The analytical directorate of the CIA has been able to produce 500 to 700 new billets for this purpose. Thus, this long-standing problem has been largely brought under control. Most analysts now understand that an inability to produce longer-range research could have a deleterious effect on their careers.

Finally, I would like to say that Robert Butterworth's paper on collection notes that collection and analysis are inseparable and that intelligence errs in making the division bureaucratically and in other ways between them so great. In the abstract, I endorse this but I would also say that in reality, from the management standpoint, it is difficult to avoid this division. Rather, it is important to have many bridges connecting these two intimately related subjects.

Consortium for the Study of Intelligence

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SUITE 601, 1730 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 ■ (202) 429-0129

March 15, 1988

Honorable Robert Gates
Deputy Director of
Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Bob,

Please find enclosed a slightly edited version of your discussant remarks at our last Consortium meeting. I should be grateful if you could review the text and make any necessary changes in the next couple of weeks.

The volume in now scheduled to be published by Lexington Books (D.C. Heath) in November.

Many thanks for you attention and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Roy Godson

Enclosure